

A group of young adults are gathered around a long table in an outdoor restaurant setting, likely a rooftop patio. They are engaged in conversation and eating. The table is set with various dishes, including salads, bread, and drinks like beer and wine. The atmosphere is casual and social. In the background, there are wooden structures and a clear sky, suggesting a pleasant outdoor environment.

Community on Mission

COMMUNITY MEETING GUIDE
FOR COMMUNITIES ON MISSION

BEFORE THE MEETING

GET TO KNOW YOUR PEOPLE.

Lead the development of community-minded relationships before you start meeting as a group and reach out to your members before your first gathering. Ideally, leaders will:

- Meet everyone individually.
- Speak to everyone in your group at least once during a Community Gathering.

PREPARE.

Be the best prepared person in your group so they know they can rely on you. Ideally, leaders will:

- Spend at least 90 minutes preparing for each gathering.
- Prepare for each community gathering by using devotionals, bible study plans, or a YouVersion program that fits the topics you are discussing. There should be elements of teaching, group discussion, and contemplation in each gathering. You might also use video lessons from Alpha if you have a group of many non-believers / spiritual seekers who are new to the Christian faith.

BE AWARE OF TIME.

You are responsible for keeping time during the meetings.

- Start the evening on time.
- Make sure that you end at the agreed upon time.
- Think about how much time the group will need for certain things (meal if applicable, bible study, prayer).

DURING THE MEAL

We recommend a shared meal with the community, but this is optional. Even if your community does not eat together, the following tips might be helpful to you.

CREATE ATMOSPHERE.

Create an environment where people feel welcome. Be open, easy-going and friendly.

LEAD CONVERSATION.

Try to guide conversation during the meal.

- Make sure no one is left out of the conversation.
- Try to integrate everybody into the conversation. If no natural conversation comes about, it might help to specifically ask people about their day or talk about highlights/lowlights of the day.

DURING BIBLE STUDY

PRAY.

Pray before and after bible study. Here are a few ideas for your practice:

- Lead a prayer for the whole group.
- Ask somebody in your group to pray.
- Try different versions of group prayer (free & individual, everybody says one sentence, everybody prays in silence).
- Pray liturgical prayers together (Great Prayer for Peace by Franz of Assisi, Our Father / The Lord's Prayer).

SUMMARIZE.

Give a brief overview of this week's content so you can ensure your group has the context they need for a productive conversation.

- Keep it short: Your group might have already prepared by reading or watching a video. Make sure you don't bore them by summarizing the entire thing.
- Keep it personal: Share with your community why you think this topic matters. What does it have to do with your life and what thoughts did you have while preparing for the meeting?
- Keep it simple: Give the group some examples or share a story or a short video to further illustrate the topic.

ASK QUESTIONS.

Our Community Gatherings should be a place for open and honest conversations. Help your group move past superficial conversation and into deeper heart conversations by asking questions.

- Ask someone who hasn't spoken yet.
- Ask for personal examples and experiences from the group.
- Challenge answers: Why do you think that is?

- Don't hesitate to ask hard questions - even questions that you do not know the answer to yourself. You are on a journey together.

MAKE THE TRANSFER.

Whether you're having a theoretical theological discussion or the topic is of active relevance to your community, lead your discussion out of simple conversation and into action.

- Challenge your community: What does this video mean for you personally?
- What does it change?
- How does it affect you and the upcoming week?
- What do you want to change in the upcoming week?

BALANCE THE CONVERSATION.

Make sure that everyone is able to contribute.

- Manage ring leaders trying to bring people to their point of view.
- Don't let only one or two people dominate the conversation.
- Encourage shy members to participate, but make sure they are comfortable.

PROTECT THE ATMOSPHERE.

The community meeting is a safe place where everyone can share their opinion, questions, doubts and fears freely.

- Intervene if there are rude comments or condescending remarks.
- Intervene if someone is made fun of.
- Make sure everyone feels comfortable to share their thoughts and feelings.

AFTER THE GATHERING

CARE FOR YOUR TEAM.

Living life as a community is cyclical and should not be thought of as a gathering outside of the context of life.

- Did somebody seem down or absent during the community gathering? Make sure to contact him or her afterwards and dig deeper.
- How can you support each other throughout the week? Maybe there are some joint activities you could do. How does the community share life updates? Find out what might work for your community.

Community on **Mission** 

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